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NOTES.

OBSERVATIONS ON GENERAL TERMS.

One hundred and thirteen school boys, between the ages of 13 and 18 were asked to write their first thoughts or mental images on seeing the words, *being, the infinite, literature, abstraction, number, play, coldness, horror, heat, faith and fun*. A word was written upon the blackboard and a few moments given the pupils to transcribe their impressions, when the word was erased and another written. A few minutes each day were given to the exercise, some days three or four words being given in succession, *number, play* and *coldness* happening to be given at one sitting.

Many of the images have the local coloring of the time and place. The boys had been studying Sir Walter Scott as their papers reveal, and during the week of the experiment the entire city of Boston was thrilled with horror by a suburban railroad disaster, the shadow of which is cast upon these papers, which also reflect the enthusiasm of the prize drill, the papers as a whole giving one the impression of a kaleidoscope where thoughts take the place of colored glass, the feelings regulating the symmetry of the forms.

Under *being* 44 wrote, human being, which may or may not have been an attempt to define; 18 wrote the name of the Deity under different forms; 8 wrote "something living;" 4 gave it as "our life;" 2 as human existence; 3 specifying Wallace, Adam and Blanche, myself, others giving general examples, as monkey, dog, horse, man and woman. If one could but know if the man were a warrior, the dog a Saint Bernard, the monkey a wild one in a cocoanut-tree or one caged in a zoölogical garden, or passing its scarlet cap for the organ-grinder's pennies—then the interest would be increased. Creation and something that cannot be limited were suggested, and one poetic mind gave us this: "I see a beautiful being over a baby's cradle, rocking him to sleep." A minute description of that "beautiful being" would be valuable. Six gave no expression to their thought about the word, which might have been from shyness about giving the thought to another, or a misunderstanding of the experiment and perhaps from a lack of any impression.

Under the word *infinite*, 29 directly named God, 1 love of God, none of these being of the seven who named Him under being; 21 gave no expression; 5 the algebraic quantity ∞ ; 5 the sky; 3 the infinite number; 2 the unknown; 1 the problem never finished, $10 \div 3$; something dark; the future; number of wonderful things; number of boys; something beyond us; space; distance; a long line of which I cannot see the end; small thing; the universe; a large tree with infinite number of leaves; a sermon in which the minister said: God is infinite love; the air; time; city; a large man; the Globe building,—to this the boy added parenthetically, "infinitely large;" miraculous; everlasting; heavenly spirits; space; day; end of being; life after death; Venus on the sun; something to happen; form of verb; grammar; book entitled "Letters from Hell." No blanks were given with this word, but there were four under *literature*, a suggestive fact.

To 26, *literature* suggested books, some specifying good books, story books, etc.; 7 wrote reading; 3 history; 3 Longfellow; 3 Scott; 3 Waverly; Ivanhoe, Dickens, The Inferno, Shakspere, Homer and Milton, each having had honorable mention; 2 dime novels were suggested. Among picturesque thoughts appeared: A man printing a book; with literature comes sight of immense library with books of all ages and peoples; ancient Greece, especially Athens and old Greek tablets. A painting, funny composition, piles of papers, and something classical are as definite perhaps as some of the adult notions of literature.

Under *abstraction* there were 37 blanks: 23 attempted to define or illustrate, some of these efforts being too unique for omission, as: flavoring for icecream; flavoring put up in bottles; getting a tooth pulled; apples and baskets; spoke of a wheel; kindness and a man with head resting on hands, elbows resting on marble top table; a boy leaning on his hand and looking as if he saw something away off; sitting at a window in the country looking blankly into the air; a crazy person comes to mind; I picture a man in deep thought; works of nature especially beautiful scenery. Others wrote kindness, goodness, grammar, future, a wood, a beautiful sky, part of speech, an abstract person, something small, pleasure of having plenty of money, basket of flowers, and, this list of words about which I am writing.

Under *number*, 37 tried to define or illustrate; 15 wrote that it brought to mind various numbers as 1,000,000, 1,2, 10, etc.; 11 left a blank; 9 wrote figure or figures; 2 algebra. Limitation was twice suggested, and under the preliminary "it brought to my mind" or "it puts in my mind" were written: A row of blocks; a collection of men; the times I have been in swimming; the wonders of arithmetic, and No. 30 La Grange street. Others stated without explanation: the first page of an arithmetic, the score in a game of tennis, a number of soldiers, a lot of people on the fourth of July, sand in the sea, crowds of people in various places. One boy wrote simply newspaper, and another that number led to numerals. A connection was made by one between this and the two succeeding words. On seeing number I thought of a number of boys—think of them yet as I see play, and the same group appears to be playing, but growing cold toward each other. Three wrote unreservedly: I see a figure, I see a figure on the door; I see an unreadable number that I once saw.

Under *play*, 37 defined or illustrated, 5 left blanks, 1 of whom gave the most elaborate of the mental pictures under abstraction; 7 specified children, some designating little children, and kittens playing in various ways; 13 thought of base ball; 4 of a theatrical performance, 1 of these specifying Lady of the Lake; 2 thought of Richard the Third; 4 of lawn tennis; 3 of piano playing, 1 giving this: Play brings to me the figure of a person seated at a piano engaged in playing it. One wrote without preliminary: A large stage over which are some red curtains and a very small man declaiming. The vividness of this sketch leaves the bad construction of the sentence for an after impression. Three wrote: I see boys or children running round; I see the boys play; I see somebody playing.

Twenty-six defined *coldness*, the physical and spiritual significance being about equally represented; 26 thought of winter or a day in winter; 7 simply wrote ice; 5 gave blanks, others giving such picturesque details as these: A man with a very stern face; a large field of ice; a frosty ground with here and there a stump; I think of the look of coldness on the face of a high-toned boy toward his poorly dressed comrades; surly temper; anger; shivering; Greeley's expedition to the North Pole; proud person; firmness in a man; making a call on a young lady who is not at home; dressing myself in a big overcoat; not being sympathetic toward the poor; don't notice any of your parents; I think of unhospitality; associated with kicking the feet against the dash-board of a horse-car and an ulster with a high collar; Iceland; sharp cutting wind; I see the frost and snow; I see a cold and haughty person; dark gray objects appear.

Fifty-one defined *heat*; 5 left blanks; 3 thought of a stove; 2 of a furnace; 1 of a furnace for melting glass, and 1 of a smelting furnace; 1 of a register and another of a radiator, gilded; 1 of the school-house boiler room; 2 of summer; 2 of fire; 3 of the sun; 1 of the desert of Sahara; the others of parading around the city; a red hot ball rolling on the

floor; melted butter; anger; a day in East Lexington with buzzing of locusts, a fat man trying to get his breath; a large vat under which is a fire filled with saints.

Fifty-five attempted to define *faith*; 14 left blanks; 3 mentioned dogs; 2 wrote simply a cross; 1 a church; 1 a catechism; 1 a prayer-book; and others such typical subjects as Daniel in the lions' den, tableau once seen, picture of Faith, Hope and Charity; 1 thought of the Supreme Being, and another of an Irishman's exclamation. To 1 was suggested the water cooler on the common; to another the story of St. Elizabeth. One wrote this: Faith brings a figure of a child on a high fence, a person below trying to get it to come down, and then the child drops. Another gave this dramatic picture: A girl following a very ugly man through a dark tunnel. And still another: A frightened child clinging to its father for protection.

It was surprising to me that the word *fun* proved the least interesting of all, 8 even leaving a blank. I half suspect that these boys did not like to write their notions of fun, and so there were attempts to define, sometimes a game being mentioned as an illustration of fun. A smiling face, a laughing boy, and a girl laughing, were suggested; one boy writing, I see boys playing.

Fifty-two defined or illustrated *horror*, 8 of whom wrote simply murder, and 1 assassination; some left blanks, others wrote battle, death, fire, an avalanche, drowning, and battle; 2 only suggesting ghosts. It would be interesting to know whether each thought of any particular fire, death or battle. One wrote, I imagine a murder; another, simply, a picture of a man to be hung. Others as follows: a beer saloon; one being killed; the accident at Roslindale; a horrible looking word, looks as if it should be spelled hell; makes me think of seeing some one in distress; makes me think of some terrible accident; a woman and a mouse; a lady looking at an alligator; seeing a man run over here; a boy I saw stabbed, and another run over by a horse car; a fellow holding his hand in the air, his hair standing on end; an old lady holding up both hands; horror is represented by a man falling from a great height, and many people are watching him; horror brought to my mind a person dying who regarded death with horror; makes me think of the time I was chased; makes me think of the feeling I would have if a large spider were crawling over me; the feeling I imagine if I were drowning; I think of a robbery; something cringing; a train, a smash up with piercing shrieks; a woman standing with hands thrown back (from a picture I saw when a child); a dream of snakes I had five years ago; and this: I see a house on fire, a girl with long streaming white hair, dressed in white standing at a window with the fire all around her.

A picture of a window was drawn on the blackboard for the same boys and they were asked to imagine it a real window and to write what they saw in looking through it. These are the pictures seen:—A tree and some houses, I seem to see a man wearing an old felt hat. I am looking in the window of a small cottage, there is an old lady sitting in a large arm chair knitting; her young daughter is getting supper and all seems comfortable and cosy. Air, houses, trees. Darkness, Christmas tree, children playing, a procession, soldiers. Streets, people, horse-cars, and carriages. Light, people, I see a street covered with many persons, horse-cars, express teams, large buildings, etc. I see an old shoemaker pegging away at a laced boot. A lot of boys going home, a long narrow lane in the country with a pasture on one side and a pond on the other, a guide post and hills in the back ground, a green field in the country. A moon-light night, a large brick house and a tree. An old woman with a large dog that lives on the same street as I. I seem to see a beautiful house surrounded by trees and a beautiful lawn. A horse and team standing. When I look through the window I seem

to see a boy fishing in a river and he seems to be catching many fish. Through an imaginary window I can see a field at the bottom of which is a lake with boats on it and beyond is a green forest. If to a room, the form of the room and arrangements. Reminiscences: Looking out of that imaginary window I seem to see my mother scolding my brother. I would see some glass. I seem to see trees, a farm house, grass and cows and horses in the pasture and a barn in the distance. I see Mt. Washington and the Presidential Range in the White Mountains. The boy who was run over by a horse-car and his arm badly crushed. I saw a man fall down. A procession of boys marching along. The scenery from a window looking toward Mt. Washington. The man selling lobsters. A palace court yard. Engine going to a fire and a crowd following it. I seem to see a black substance through the window. The sky. Makes me think of the faces at Blackwell's Island, looking earnestly at the Boston boat. A criminal behind a prison door. A dark stormy night. I see a face, it is a sad one with large eyes which have evidently been crying; it is a girl's face with a charity cap on. A train rushing along, filled with passengers. A landscape. I see a face through this window. It appears to me like a look out on to the world. A game of foot-ball. A horse-car loaded with people going down the street. A field. A woman sewing. I see the future. I see a horse and team passing. Transparent. Distant hill. A dungeon. Trees, fields, spring, horse-chestnut tree. A hill covered with snow and a few bare trees. Makes me think of seeing some one in a window. A large room with fine things in it. Soldiers. Empty room. Friend. Nothing in particular. The state of Illinois. I saw some houses through the window. I see the trees and houses as I look through the window. Stars. I can see green fields and the ocean with a light-house on a large rock in the middle of it. A railroad station. I am in a farm house on a farm and looking upon the corn field and a few trees. Some trees. A lawn enclosed by a fence with a fountain in the center. I see a house in the distance. Sky, trees, houses seem to be the only panorama of a window. I seem to see a blackboard. A room. Saw a regiment of soldiers passing. I see a large house, square and brown. A dog fight on Columbus Avenue. A comfortable room. I see an evening sky full of stars. I see the dog outside. Looking at a picture I think of what it is of, where it is, and who was engaged in it. A steamboat passing down stream. Seeing a sight through a window which never can be forgot, either of horror or pleasure. I see a young man. It reminds me of the garden, a bed of geraniums at the house I lived in when I was in Germany. Looking at a boy. A scuttle of a sinking ship. One would see as if painted on a panorama before him from childhood to old age. I see through this window the ocean with about fifty yachts sailing. A tree and some houses. I see a child running across the street, a team is coming, and the child is knocked down and killed. A lamp post. A boy fishing.

Eight boys drew a blank, and several of them drew pictures of windows on their own papers.

Such meagre data as the above show that those who disparage "mere sense knowledge" disparage children, who up to these ages show few traces of any other kind of knowledge, but think mainly in visual pictures, their mental life being chiefly made up of imagination and memory of their personal experiences. Logical definitions are never attempted. A true psychological definition of such terms could be got by greatly increasing the number of such returns and presenting the results by graphic, statistic and descriptive methods. If anywhere constant appeal from the individual to the general consciousness is constantly needed, it is in the realm of abstract and general terms. If a carefully selected set of terms in the ethical field could be selected and

returns gathered thus and separately for different ages and sexes, valuable results might be expected. It is interesting to compare such results as are presented in the case of the imaginary window with those described as "crystal-vision," reviewed in this number of the JOURNAL.

Francis Galton in some studies of this nature, but on adult minds, makes a table of results from which he draws this conclusion: "Hence we may see the greater fixity of the earlier associations and might measurably determine the decrease of fixity as the date of their formation became less remote." The city teacher more than any other needs to grasp this law, and give the children an early and vivid outlook upon nature; walls and horse-cars, pavements and engines are so likely to demand the attention of children that no opportunity should be lost to give a glimpse of the sky or clouds; to turn the thoughts to a grass plat or even a grass blade and so open the windows of the soul in the direction of influences which will accelerate the growth of intellectual and spiritual life.

S. E. WILTSE.

Under the title of "*Die Eigennamen in der medicinischen Nomenclatur*," Dr. Med. Richard Sy has collected some 600 proper names as applied in medicine, anatomy, and some other branches. Each entry is followed by a short definition and sometimes a line regarding the person whose name is entered. The list as a whole must be useful, but in detail is open to criticism so far, at least, as the neurological terms are concerned. For example, the Deiter's cells of the central nervous system are not mentioned, and the definition of the foramen of Monro is irrelevant.

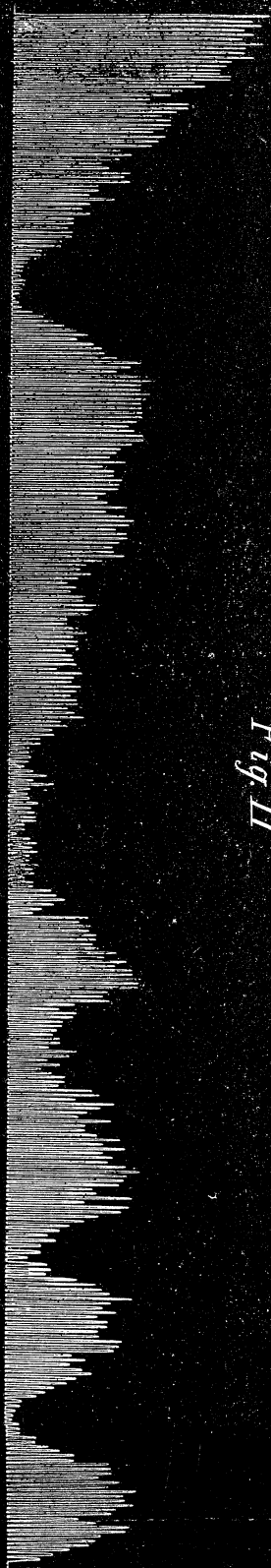
The American Journal of Insanity, for October, 1889, contains a paper read by Dr. H. E. Allison, Superintendent of the State Asylum for Insane Criminals, in Auburn, N. Y., at the Newport meeting of the medical superintendents this year. He advocates a general system of reporting autopsies in our asylums, and gives a "form for post-mortem records." One side of this contains blanks to be filled in with the most necessary data, and the other has four outlines of the brain from Ecker, (dorsal, ventral, mesial and lateral aspects), on which any superficial lesion can be directly recorded.

The dangers of the psychiatric calling are presented in a laborious report just published by H. Lähn in Berlin. The average age of death of 431 alienists was 57.81 years, which is very low compared with the average age in other branches of the medical profession. Of 162 alienists, the cause of whose death is known, 7 were killed by patients, 10 fatally injured by lunatics, 6 committed suicide, 11 died of slow brain diseases, 17 of apoplexy. In all, 42 per cent. are thought to have died from causes directly or indirectly arising from their vocation.

The long discussion concerning the recognition of partial or reduced responsibility for criminal acts in the penal code in Germany seems likely to issue adversely to the proposed rubric. That there are many border-line cases which deserve neither acquittal nor the full penalty, is admitted, but the practical difficulties of adjudicating such cases in the face of the general incompetency of both jurists and physicians, are thought to be decisive against this class.

In a careful study of the effect of imprisonment on insanity, Kirn (*Berlin. klin. Wochenschrift*, 1889, No. 33), shows that confinement has a very strong tendency to bring out hereditary taint; that there is commonly immunity if the first six months are endured without morbid symptoms; that collective imprisonment tends to chronic and slowly unfolding diseases, while isolation causes acute psychoses with especial prominence of sensory hallucinations.

Fig. II



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Fig. IV

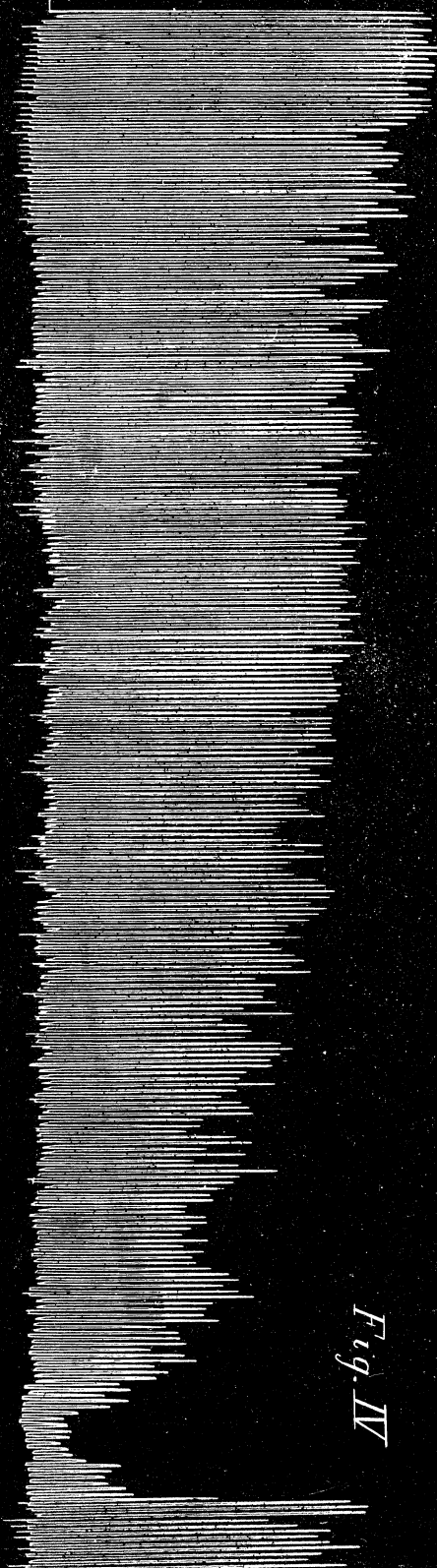
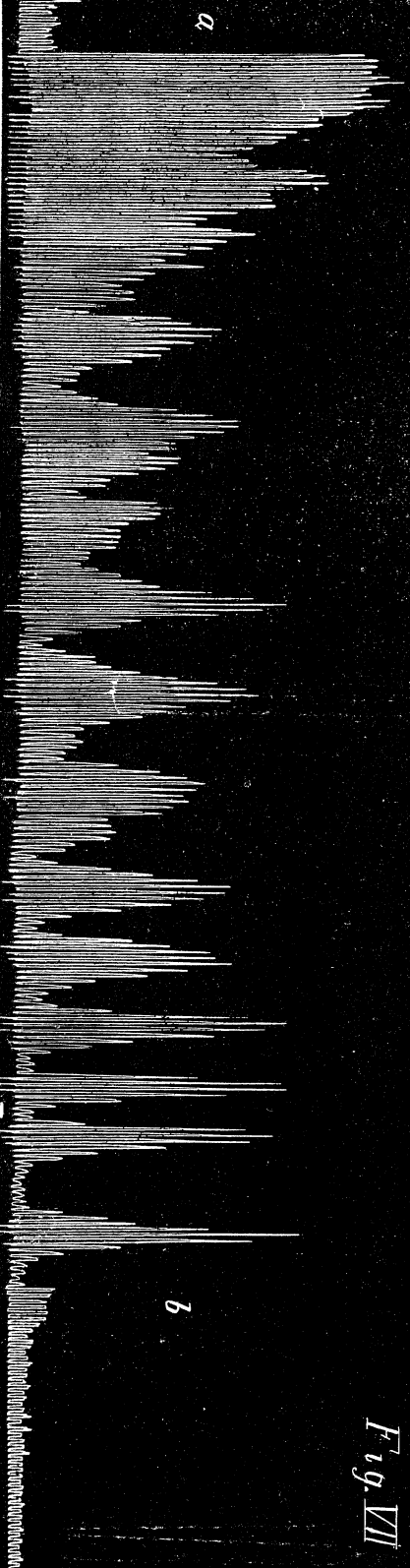


Fig. VII



a

b

PLATE I.

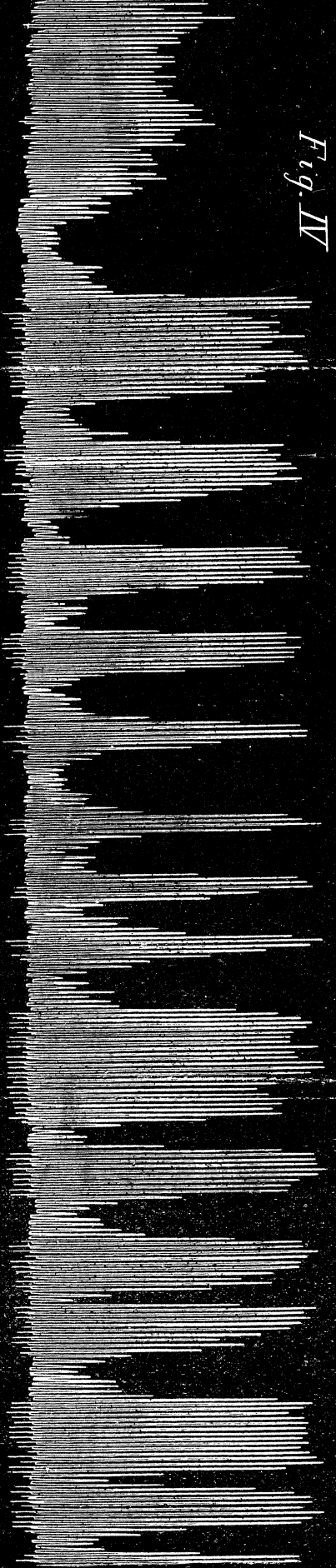
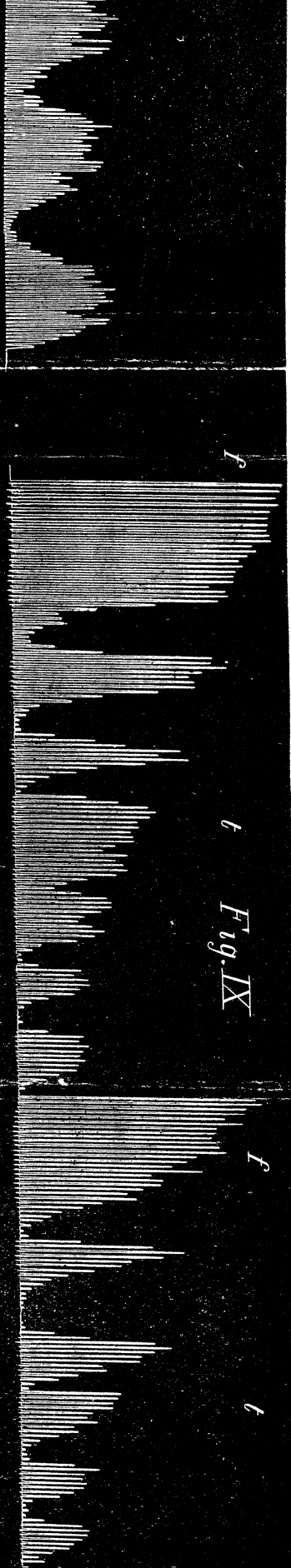


Fig. VII

